



Resource Guide for Older Adults and Caregivers

This resource guide accompanies the BC Guideline [Frailty in Older Adults – Early Identification and Management](#)

This resource guide includes information on the following topics:

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| ▪ Physical Activity | 2 | ▪ Managing Chronic Conditions | 3 |
| ▪ Fall Prevention | 2 | ▪ Help at Home (Medical and Non-Medical Support) | 4 |
| ▪ Nutrition | 3 | ▪ Caregiver Support | 4 |
| ▪ Social Connections | 3 | | |

DO YOU HAVE A HEALTH QUESTION FOR A NURSE, PHARMACIST, DIETITIAN OR EXERCISE PROFESSIONAL?

- ▶ **Contact HealthLink BC - HealthLinkBC.ca** ☎ (toll-free) 8-1-1 | (hearing impaired) 7-1-1

Provides **non-emergency** health information and advice.

You can speak with a:

- **Nurse:** 24/7, 365 days of the year
- **Pharmacist:** every night from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m.
- **Dietician or Exercise Professional:** weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Interpretation services are available in over 130 languages. Call ☎ 8-1-1 and state the language you need.

DO YOU NEED HELP FINDING HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES OR PROGRAMS IN YOUR AREA?

- ▶ **HealthLink BC - HealthLinkBC.ca** ☎ (toll-free) 8-1-1 | (hearing impaired) 7-1-1

A **health services navigator** can help you find health and community services 24/7, 365 days of the year.

- ▶ **BC211 - www.bc211.ca** ☎ (toll-free) 2-1-1 | (hearing impaired) 604-875-0885

- **Online directory of BC community, government and social services.**
- **Information and referral services** available through online chat across BC, and by phone and text in Island Health, Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health regions. Phone available 24/7, 365 days of the year. Text, online chat, and hearing impaired line are available 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.

ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE ACCESSING HEALTH CARE OR ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE CARE YOU RECEIVED?

- ▶ **Seniors Health Care Support Line** ☎ (toll-free): 1-877-952-3181

www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca

Phone line available weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

ARE YOU CONCERNED THAT YOU OR ANOTHER OLDER ADULT ARE BEING ABUSED OR MISTREATED?

- ▶ **Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL)** ☎ (toll-free) 1-866-437-1940
seniorsfirstbc.ca ☎ (hearing impaired) 1-855-306-1443

Those concerned about abuse or mistreatment can speak with trained staff and volunteers, including staff who can answer legal questions. Available Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Interpretation services available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Get your copy of the BC Seniors' Guide!

- **[BC Seniors' Guide](#)**: A resource guide for older adults with sections on benefits, health, lifestyle, housing, transportation, finances, and safety and security. Available in **English, French, Chinese and Punjabi**. To obtain a print copy, call ☎ **1-877-952-3181**.
- **[BC Elders' Guide](#)**: An adaptation of the BC Seniors' Guide for First Nations and Aboriginal Elders. To obtain a print copy, call ☎ **1-866-913-0033**.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity can improve your mental health, help you manage chronic diseases, and prevent illness and disability. Over time, it will give you more energy, build your self-confidence and help you stay independent.

- ➔ **Check with your doctor to see what types and amounts of activities are right for you.**
- ➔ **Contact HealthLinkBC at ☎ 8-1-1 and ask to speak to an exercise professional** (available Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m): they can answer questions about appropriate physical activity and exercise programs for your age, ability and medical condition.
- ➔ **Learn more about the benefits of physical activity** – here are some resources to help you get started:
 - [HealthLinkBC.ca: Physical Activity](#)
 - [HealthyFamiliesBC.ca: Activity & Lifestyle](#)
 - [gov.bc.ca: Move for Life! Exercise Video](#) (On YouTube or call ☎ **8-1-1** to obtain a free DVD by mail)
- ➔ **Look for exercise programs for older adults at your local community or recreation centre.** Consider joining a local walking group, such as a mall walking club.
 - ***For help finding community services and programs, please see page 1.***
 - [gov.bc.ca: BC Seniors' Community Parks](#): There are 18+ parks across BC with free outdoor exercise equipment designed to help older adults stay mobile, healthy, and physically active.

FALL PREVENTION

Falls are the leading cause of injury for older adults and are the main reason that older adults lose their independence. Most falls can be prevented – there are resources to help older adults stay fall and injury free.

- ➔ **Learn more about fall prevention** – here are some tips and resources to help you get started:
 - [FindingBalanceBC.ca](#): Information and videos on fall prevention.
 - [HealthLinkBC.ca: Preventing Falls in Older Adults](#)
- ➔ **Increase your physical activity and muscle strength and improve your mobility and balance**
 - [FindingBalanceBC.ca: SAIL Home Activity Program](#): A series of home exercises to help improve balance and muscle strength.
- ➔ **Reduce trip and slip hazards in your home or outdoors**: Clear clutter from walkways and stairs, remove carpets/rugs that are a tripping hazard, use nightlights. Install handrails on both sides of stairs.
- ➔ **Have regular vision check-ups and correct vision problems**: Visit your optometrist once a year.
- ➔ **Review medications with your doctor or pharmacist**: Some drugs may increase your risk of falling.
- ➔ **If you have a high risk of falls or hip fractures, consider wearing a hip protector** – visit [AgingisaContactSport.com](#) for more information.

NUTRITION

Nutritional needs change as you age. But no matter how old you are, eating well is always an important way to stay healthy. Healthy eating can give you the energy you need to stay active, prevent or slow down the progress of many chronic illnesses, and help you cope better with physical and mental stress.

- ➔ **Contact HealthLink BC at ☎ 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a dietitian** (available Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) who can answer questions about eating right for your age and medical condition.
- ➔ **Learn more about healthy eating and nutrition** – here are some resources to help you get started:
 - HealthLinkBC.ca: Healthy Eating
 - HealthyFamiliesBC.ca: Food & Nutrition
 - gov.bc.ca: Healthy Eating for Seniors Handbook (Available in English, French, Chinese and Punjabi. You can also order a free print version by mail by calling ☎ 8-1-1.)
- ➔ **Consider grocery and/or meal delivery:** If you have trouble getting to the grocery store, many stores will deliver groceries for a small fee. If meal preparation is a challenge, many local catering companies and non-profit organizations deliver ready-to-eat or frozen meals through “Meals on Wheels” programs.
- ➔ **Attend community meals for seniors:** Many non-profit groups and community centres across BC organize community meals for seniors. These community meals are also a great way to socialize!

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Older adults who are socially connected and participate in their communities are more likely to eat well, engage in physical activity, and feel good about themselves. People without strong social networks may become isolated, which can lead to reduced mental and physical health, as well as depression.

- ➔ **Find out about activities and opportunities to connect with people in your community or neighbourhood.** Contact organizations like public libraries, community or recreation centres, cultural centres or faith-based groups, Aboriginal Friendship Centres, or immigration resettlement agencies.
 - *For help finding community services and programs, please see page 1.*
- ➔ **Joining a club, taking a class, and volunteering your time are all good ways to stay socially connected.**
- ➔ **Staying in touch with neighbours, friends, and family can help keep your social network strong.**

MANAGING CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Self-management programs give people the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to successfully manage chronic health conditions. These programs provide information and teach practical skills.

- ➔ **Adults with chronic health conditions and family members can participate in self-management programs offered in communities throughout BC at no cost.** Online courses are also available.
 - **Self-Management BC:** www.selfmanagementbc.ca ☎ (toll-free) 1-866-902-3767
 - Also offers a telephone-based health coaching program.
 - **Pain BC -** www.PainBC.ca: Offers self-management courses for those in chronic pain.
- ➔ **Adults living with dementia or who have questions about the disease can speak with trained staff and volunteers Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**
 - **Alzheimer Society of British Columbia:** www.alzheimerbc.org
 - **First Link® Dementia Helpline (toll free) 1-800-936-6033**

HELP AT HOME (MEDICAL AND NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT)

Home and community care services can help older adults who are having difficulty coping with activities of daily living at home. These services can help older adults continue to live independently in their own homes.

- ➔ **Find out if you're eligible for publically-subsidized care by contacting the Home and Community Care office in your local health authority** – visit gov.bc.ca: Home and Community Care or contact HealthLinkBC at ☎ **8-1-1** to get contact information. Available services include:
 - community nursing for acute, chronic, palliative or rehabilitative support;
 - community rehabilitation by licensed physical and occupational therapists;
 - adult day services for personal care, health care and social and recreational activities;
 - home support for assistance with activities of daily living;
 - caregiver respite and relief;
 - assisted living and residential care; and
 - end-of-life care services.
- ➔ **Arrange for non-medical home support services** such as transportation to appointments, light housekeeping, light yard work, minor home repairs, grocery shopping and friendly visiting.
 - **United Way – Better at Home:** www.betterathome.ca or ☎ **1-604-268-1312**. Available in 60+ communities across BC. Some services are free, while others are available for a small fee based on income.
 - **A wide range of similar services are offered by private and non-profit organizations across BC.**
 - ***For help finding home support services, please see page 1.***
- ➔ **Arrange for a medical alert device:** Medical alert devices provide emergency assistance at the push of a button. These devices can ensure you quickly get help when you need it, especially if you live alone. Visit www.canwestlifeline.com or call ☎ **1-800-LIFELINE** to find medical alert lifeline programs in communities across BC.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Family caregivers are a vital part of the care team. Family caregivers can help older adults remain at home and maintain a better quality of life. However, sometimes caregivers need help too.

- ➔ **There are many opportunities for private or publically-subsidized respite services across BC** such as: adult day programs, respite hotels, respite care in residential care facilities, and "in home" services.
 - ***For help finding respite and support services, please see page 1.***
- ➔ **Caregivers may be eligible for employment insurance compassionate care benefits** if they have to be away from work temporarily to provide care or support to a family member who is gravely ill or dying.
 - **Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefits Program:** www.canada.ca ☎ (toll-free): **1-800-206-7218** (hearing-impaired): **1-800-529-3742** (Automated Telephone Service).
- ➔ **Education and support services for caregivers:**
 - **Family Caregivers of BC:** www.familycaregiversbc.ca ☎ **Support Line (toll-free): 1-877-520-3267**
Support line, support groups, referral to community organizations, and education.
 - **BC Bereavement Helpline:** www.bcbereavementhelpline.com ☎ (toll-free): **1-877-779-2223**
A free and confidential service that connects individuals to grief support services in BC.